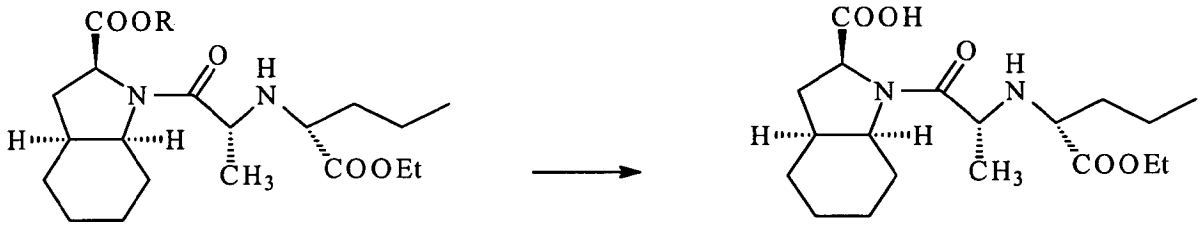
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril of formula (I) from a protected precursor compound of formula (II)



(II) (I)

wherein R represents a carboxyl protecting group, which process comprises subjecting a compound of formula (II) to deprotection of the carboxylic group COOR attached to the heterocyclic ring so as to yield the corresponding free acid, which deprotection is carried out in the presence of a base which forms a pharmaceutically acceptable salt with said free acid formed by said deprotection.

2. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein R represents optionally substituted aralkyl.

3. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 2, wherein R represents unsubstituted benzyl.

4. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 2, wherein R represents 4-halo substituted, or 4-C_{1-4}alkoxy substituted benzyl.

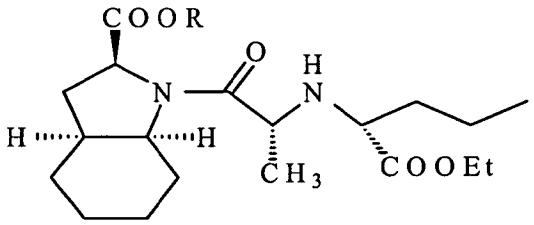
5. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 4, wherein R represents 4-Cl benzyl, or 4-methoxy benzyl.

6. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein said deprotection comprises hydrogenolysis in the presence of a noble metal catalyst.

7. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 6, wherein the noble metal catalyst comprises palladium-on-charcoal ~~palladium-on-chacoal~~.

8. (Previously Presented) A process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, wherein said base comprises t-butylamine.

9. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing perindopril t-butylamine from a protected precursor compound of formula (II)



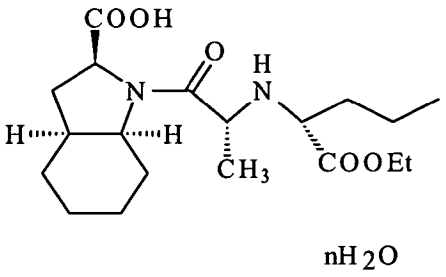
(II)

wherein R represents a carboxyl protecting group, which process comprises subjecting a compound of formula (II) to deprotection of the carboxylic group COOR attached to the heterocyclic ring so as to yield the corresponding free acid, which deprotection is carried out in the presence of t-butylamine so as to form the t-butylamine salt of perindopril.

10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 9, wherein R represents unsubstituted benzyl.

11. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 9, wherein deprotection comprises hydrogenolysis in the presence of palladium-on-charcoal ~~palladium-on-chacoal~~.

12. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, which further comprises hydrating a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril obtained by said process so as to yield a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of hydrated perindopril of formula (Ia)



(Ia)

wherein n is an integer of 1 to 5, or a reciprocal of integers 2 to 5.

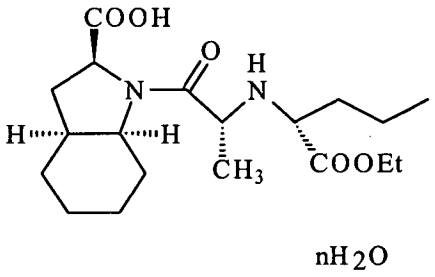
13. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 12, wherein n is 1.

14. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a monohydrate of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril, which process comprises hydrating a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril so as to yield said monohydrate.

15. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 12, wherein perindopril t-butylamine is hydrated to yield perindopril-t-butylamine monohydrate.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutically acceptable salt of hydrated perindopril of formula (Ia)



(Ia)

wherein n is an integer of 1 to 5, or a reciprocal of integers 2 to 5.

18. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutically acceptable salt according to claim 17, where n is 1.

19. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutically acceptable salt according to claim 17, which is the t-butylamine salt.

20. (Previously Presented) Perindopril t-butylamine monohydrate.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) Perindopril t-butylamine monohydrate having an X-ray powder diffraction pattern with characteristic peaks (2 θ): 9.5504, 14.8600, 15.7486, 16.5400, 20.0400, 21.0499, 22.0600, 24.1744, 26.3300 and 27.1600.

23. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising ~~an effective ACE inhibitory amount of~~ a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril according to claim [[16]] 17, together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, diluents or excipients therefor.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method of inhibiting ACE to treat at least one disease state selected from the group consisting of hypertension and congestive heart failure in a patient in need thereof comprising administering to said patient an effective ACE inhibitory amount of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril according to claim 17 [[16]].

26. (Cancelled)

27. (New) A hydrated perindopril product made according to the process of claim 12.

28. (New) A hydrated perindopril product made according to the process of claim 13.

29. (New) A hydrated perindopril salt made according to the process of claim 14.

30. (New) A method of inhibiting ACE in a patient in need thereof comprising administering to said patient a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril according to claim 17.